



The Navajo Nation Office of the President and Vice President

CONTACTS:

Jared Touchin, Communications Director
(928) 274-4275

Crystalyne Curley, Sr. Public Information Officer
(928) 274-2758

nnopvp.communications@gmail.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 2, 2022

Mariano Lake celebrates the completion of new bridge and paving of community road



PHOTO: New bridge and pavement along N11 located north of Mariano Lake Chapter, N.M. on Nov. 1, 2022.

MARIANO LAKE, N.M. – On Tuesday, Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez, Council Delegate Edmund Yazzie, and Navajo Nation Division of Transportation Director Garret Silversmith joined community members in Mariano Lake, N.M., as they recognized construction workers and local leaders for the completion of a new bridge and pavement along N11, which serves as a primary route for residents, school buses, Navajo Technical University students, and first responders.

In January, President Nez signed off on the construction contract with Navajo Engineering and Construction Authority for the road project, which included new pavement for approximately 3.7 miles of the road to help address safety concerns and improve access for school, work, commerce, health, and emergency response. The project, funded by the Federal Highway

Administration Tribal Transportation Program, also included grading, subgrade treatment, drainage structures, fencing, cattle guards, gates, and new signage. The roadway accommodates an average of 250 vehicles per day.

“This project represents progress and change for the Mariano Lake community and the Navajo Nation. Change takes time and it doesn’t happen overnight, but with the persistence of local leaders and many partners we continue to move road projects forward to completion. The Navajo Division of Transportation and NECA have completed many road improvements together, but we understand that there is much more that remains to be done and we are committed to securing the resources to do much more in our communities. We congratulate the Mariano Lake community and thank our past and present leaders for their support,” said President Nez.

In 2019, President Nez led the effort to purchase the Navajo Nation’s very first gravel pit near the community of Dilkon, Ariz., to reduce the costs of transporting materials for road projects and making resources available closer to communities on the Navajo Nation.

During Tuesday’s ceremony, Mariano Lake Chapter President James R. DeGroat thanked President Nez and Mariano Chapter officials for supporting the project. He also called for a moment of silence to honor and remember former Navajo Nation Vice Chairman and Speaker of the Navajo Nation Council, Edward T. Begay, who passed away in June. Prior to serving in those positions, Begay served as the Vice President of Mariano Lake Chapter. On behalf of the Mariano Lake Chapter, President DeGroat presented a hand drawn portrait of Edward T. Begay to President Nez in appreciation of his support for the community. DeGroat, who also designed the official Navajo Nation flag, drew the portrait in honor of his friend, the late former Vice Chairman and Speaker.

Council Delegate Edmund Yazzie, who represents Mariano Lake as a member of the 24th Navajo Nation Council, reflected on the transportation challenges that many residents have dealt with due to muddy and snow packed road conditions. He recalled a time when he and his late father got stuck in the mud along the N11 roadway.

“With the completion of this roadway, I know my father and many of the elders of this community are looking down on us and they are happy to see this. We have many elders, students, and first responders who will benefit from this road improvement and I am very thankful to all of the past and current leaders who devoted their commitment and support for the community,” said Delegate Yazzie. He also recognized and thanked former Council



PHOTO: Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez with Council Delegate Edmund Yazzie, local leaders, and construction workers at the site of the new bridge and pavement along N11 located north of Mariano Lake Chapter, N.M. on Nov. 1, 2022.

Delegate Davis Filfred for securing additional funding for the road project, as a previous member of the Resources and Development Committee.

This marks the second recent road project completed in Mariano Lake. In August 2021, NDOT and CB Emulsion completed construction of road improvements for N-7113, located nearly three miles south of Mariano Lake Chapter, which included subgrade preparation, road reconditioning, a three-inch gravel base, double course seal, two culvert installations and signage along the route.

In June, the community celebrated the completion of a new telecommunications tower, owned by Smith Bagley, which provides Cellular One phone service as well as AT&T and FirstNet for our first responders. Sacred Wind Communications will also use this tower for broadband services for the region.

The Office of the President and Vice President thanks Mariano Lake Chapter President Jay R. DeGroat, Vice President Henry T. Begay, Secretary/ Treasurer Henry P. Begay, Jr., Community Services Coordinator Leandra K. James, NDOT, NECE, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and many other partners who supported the project.

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